REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 27-49 now stand in the present application, having replaced previously filed claims 1 and 3-26. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to duplicate numbering of previously submitted claim 24 and has rejected claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. As noted above, Applicants have submitted a new set of claims 27-49 which obviate the Examiner's objection and § 112, second paragraph, rejection of the claims.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-17 and 19-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Du et al. ("Du") and has rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Du. As noted above, Applicants have submitted a new set of claims 27-49 which are believed to overcome the Examiner's §§ 102 and 103 rejections of the claims.

Newly added claims 27-49 now include the limitation that the availability change proposal is a future availability change proposal including dates / times at which the first worker (resource in later claims) is available for allocation for tasks. Support for the claim amendments can be found in the present specification at page 15, lines 14-15 and age 23, lines 12-20. As will be described in greater detail below, this new set of claims including the above-described limitation are not believed to be taught or suggested by the cited art.

In applying Du against the present claims, the Examiner alleges that Du's GRM equates to Applicant's claimed "data processor" and that Du's LRMs equate to Applicant's claimed worker/resources. *See* Office Action at page 11. The Examiner further alleges that should a first LRM suffer an unpredictable status change (col. 16, lines 56 – 67), which causes the first LRM's consistency predicate C (col. 14, lines 39 to 47) to be met, the first LRM will report the change in its status to the GRM (col. 18 lines 18-20). *Id.* The consistency predicate equates to Applicant's claimed "constraint definition data." The signal sent from the LRM to the GRM constitutes (argues the Examiner) a first resource availability change proposal. The GRM thus allocates a task in a workflow it is handling to a second LRM – that allocation being a 'rejection signal' according to the Examiner. The second LRM receives the "rejection signal" and then performs the task which might otherwise have been performed by the first LRM – thus compensating for the first LRM's availability change proposal.

Broadly speaking, Du proposes that a team of LRMs should collaborate to perform a work requirement. That collaboration merely takes the form of a first LRM standing in for a second LRM in the event that the first LRM fails. Applicant's invention is different in that it contemplates that a second LRM might agree to stand-in for a first LRM in the event that the first LRM predicts that it will be unavailable at some specified time in the future. This is now more clearly recited in newly added claims 27-49 which specify that the previously-claimed "availability change proposals" are "future availability change proposals indicating dates/times at which said worker/ resource is available for allocation to tasks."

Du does mention 'predictable status changes' (col. 16, lines 24 to 55). These are stored by the GRM and used by it to update the status of each LRM when the time of the "predictable status change" arrives. These are combined at the GRM with availability updates arriving from LRMs when they are subject to an unpredictable status change which is sufficient to breach a reporting threshold. Du does not contemplate allocating resources to tasks in advance of the need to carry out that task. Instead tasks are allocated to resources when the task is required to be performed. *See*, for example, Du at col. 4, lines 57 to 65, col. 8, line 1 "at run-time," and col. 21, lines 16 to 33.

There is thus a problem with Du's system – it doesn't avoid availability problems it just reacts to them at the last minute. In contrast, Applicant's invention proactively keeps future availability of the resources in the system within predetermined constraints. This results in a more efficient allocation of resources to tasks. Since Du does not teach or suggest this key feature (and limitation) of Applicant's inventions, newly added claims 27-49 patentably define over the cited art.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all of claims 27-49, now standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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